



Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School

Business Plan

Head teacher Lesley Phillips

Chair of Governing Body Roger Fox

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BUSINESS PLAN – OUR HISTORY

Our History – **who we are**

- Ashton Middle School is situated in the heart of Dunstable town centre, the heart of Dunstable's history and the heart of Dunstable's community.
- In 1726, the Ashton Foundation established an educational institution based on the teachings and principles of the Church of England.
- Our current building is a well maintained, grade II listed building which dates back to 1888.
- For centuries, Ashton has worked with the parents and children of Dunstable and provided education as a boarding school, grammar school and middle school
- We are again proposing to reflect the wishes of the local community by changing our age range and continuing **Ashton's evolution** in becoming **The Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School**.
- Former pupils include **Mike Bannister** (pilot of the last commercial Concorde Flight), **Gary Cooper** (Hollywood Actor), **Geoffrey Moore CBE** (Vauxhall Motor's Chairman), **Norman Morris** (Professor who revolutionised maternity care in the UK), **Khawaja Nazimuddin** (Pakistan's 2nd Prime Minister in the 1950's) and **Kevin McCloud** (TV Presenter – Grand Designs)
- Ashton is no stranger to local and national media. Our recent appearance on BBC's Children In Need has been followed by ITV who have just finished filming a documentary on the 64 Ashton students who lost their lives in WWI (due to be broadcast in the summer)

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY**Mission Statement – what we stand for**

At Ashton Church of England Middle School we aim to provide the maximum opportunity within the best possible environment which will enable all who work in this school to grow and develop to the best of his or her ability in the tradition of the Christian faith. Incorporated in this statement is our vision of the pursuit of excellent in teaching and learning.

- The school believes that continuing to offer access to a full curriculum provided **by specialist teachers** in **specialist areas**, from the age of 11, will provide our pupils with the skills and subject knowledge to enhance their learning to ensure consistent progress is made.
- We have proved (OFSTED 2013) that progress is **good** for the years our pupils are with us. Intervention is effective and consistent and pupils enjoy learning. We believe that this will lead to good or better progress at KS4.
- Our work with **vulnerable pupils** has been consistently **highly commended** by OFSTED and by our local community e.g. Jigsaw and Social Services etc.
- We also believe that the **nurturing environment** we provide for these pupils will also lead to higher levels of **progress and success at KS4**.
- OFSTED stated that the governing body were, and are, confident, they will continue to move the school forward.
- The school has a robust action plan following its recent OFSTED inspection. It was acknowledged by the inspectors that the SLT and governing body were already aware of, and working on, all issues highlighted. The School Improvement Partner has approved the action plan and he, along with the Governing Body, is monitoring its implementation and progress.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)**Curriculum (current) – dynamic & responsive**

Our curriculum is, and always has been, broad, balanced and innovative. We are confident to try new initiatives and exploring alternatives for our pupils. For example this year we have initiated three major curriculum changes:

- Year 5 PACA (Performance And Creative Art), which brings together all the performing arts.
- Year 8 SHOE (Science, Health and Outdoor Education) bringing together science and outdoor education,
- A highly successful SAS (Strive, Achieve, Succeed) group which prepares pupils who arrive with very poor language and maths skills to access the normal curriculum.

This bold, innovative approach would be continued and developed further in an 11 – 16 school and the small nature of the school would mean that we could respond to the needs of our pupils, developing the curriculum to ensure that all pupils make good progress and are ready for the workplace.

We have plans to develop our already well respected support for our vulnerable pupils and extend our more able, providing them with new and exciting challenges.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

Curriculum (current) – delivers

- Our pupils know how to behave, have an **excellent learning ethos** and high attendance, **consistently 94-96%**.
- In year 8 our pupils are already competing and performing at the highest levels and we have committed staff, experienced in delivering GCSEs, who will continue to facilitate this achievement up to year 11 and beyond. Over recent years we have prepared year 8 students for GCSE level work in both maths and French, indicating that our staff are confident and competent to deliver to GCSE level.

“Progress in mathematics accelerates in Key Stage 3. Last year’s year 8 pupils made almost as much progress across years 7 and 8 as expected nationally across years 7 to 9” OFSTED 2013

- Our work with vulnerable pupils has been consistently highly commended by OFSTED and by our local community e.g. Jigsaw and Social Services etc.

“Support for pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs is good and helps most of these pupils to understand and manage their behaviour better” OFSTED 2013

“I am writing to thank you for the excellent agency partnership working you have provided our service and the safety of our clients’ children” South Beds Women’s Refuge March 2014

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

Curriculum (future) - options and choices

Qualification		Year 10	Year 11
GCSE	English & English Literature	4 lessons	
GCSE	Mathematics	4 lessons	
GCSE	Triple Science	6 lessons	
GCSE	Double Science		
GCSE	ICT	1 lesson	
	Physical Education	2 lessons	1 lesson
GCSE	Religious and Social Education	1 lesson	
GCSE	French	3 lessons	
Options			

Options will include:

- GCSE Art
- GCSE Business Studies
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE Graphic Design
- GCSE History
- GCSE ICT
- GCSE Media Studies
- BTEC Music
- GCSE Resistant Materials
- BTEC Sport
- GCSE Textiles
- An Additional Work-Based Program

Alternative European Baccalaureate (EBac)

We are also considering an EBac based course for more able pupils who would be accelerated to complete this by end of year 11. We have proven experience of getting pupils to at least GCSE level in maths and French by the end of year 8, so this would not be difficult to achieve. We already have the expertise to teach the required subjects.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)**Curriculum (future) – flexible & dynamic****Years 7 & 8 (KS3)**

As per current timetable. The amended staffing structure, starting in September 2014, makes provision for the teaching of all current subjects without compromise. This structure is funded within our current budget.

Years 9-11 (KS4)

The current staffing structure allows includes expertise to teach all of the areas listed to GCSE level. As numbers increase we would employ staff to extend and enhance options available, depending on student demand.

School Day

The school day would be as currently operating i.e. 25 period week, with each period being 1 hour. The timetable runs over 2 weeks, in a secondary school this would allow for greater flexibility and more options for students. Once we begin to admit years nine and ten a change or modification would be considered to assess whether an earlier or later start would also be beneficial.

Grouping

Another consideration would be vertical grouping instead of year group classes. As with any proposed change, the effectiveness of this approach will be assessed fully before implementation

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)**Extra-Curricular Provision**

The school has been recognised for many years for its extra-curricular provision. Each week we currently have over 50 clubs running at lunchtime and after school, in a variety of areas. This demonstrates not only the commitment of staff but also their versatility. We would enhance and develop opportunities available as the age range increases.

Alternative Curriculum For Our Vulnerable Pupils

We recognise our current strengths with vulnerable and less able pupils and would build on this to offer an alternative curriculum to meet their diverse needs. We already have an adapted timetable with our SAS programme (Strive Achieve Succeed), which is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum. We are in the process of planning an extended and adapted SAS group for older pupils so that we can provide an appropriate curriculum for our less able pupils or those with specific needs. We have allocated and budgeted for staff to run this programme.

Curriculum - Summary

The above plan demonstrates our current thinking and is an indication of some of the options we would be able to offer.

We are keen to emphasise that **this is a starting point**.

Our leadership team and our **enthusiastic and innovative** staff will adapt as the needs of our pupils and the desires of our parents dictate, and we will design and develop a curriculum that delivers outstanding educational standards and keeps the needs of our **children at the heart of everything we do**.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PEOPLE

Our people – our responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that they provide enough school places for the children of Dunstable.
- It is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council **to work together with Ashton**, to drive high educational standards, to offer parents **a real and genuine choice** and to show that Ashton is more than financially and educationally viable. Working together, Central Bedfordshire Council and Ashton can and will show that **Ashton is financially and educationally successful**
- It is responsibility of the committed and hardworking people of Ashton (our teachers, our support staff, our leaders and our governors) to deliver that success and the outstanding educational results for our pupils and our parents.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PEOPLE

Headline Staffing Numbers

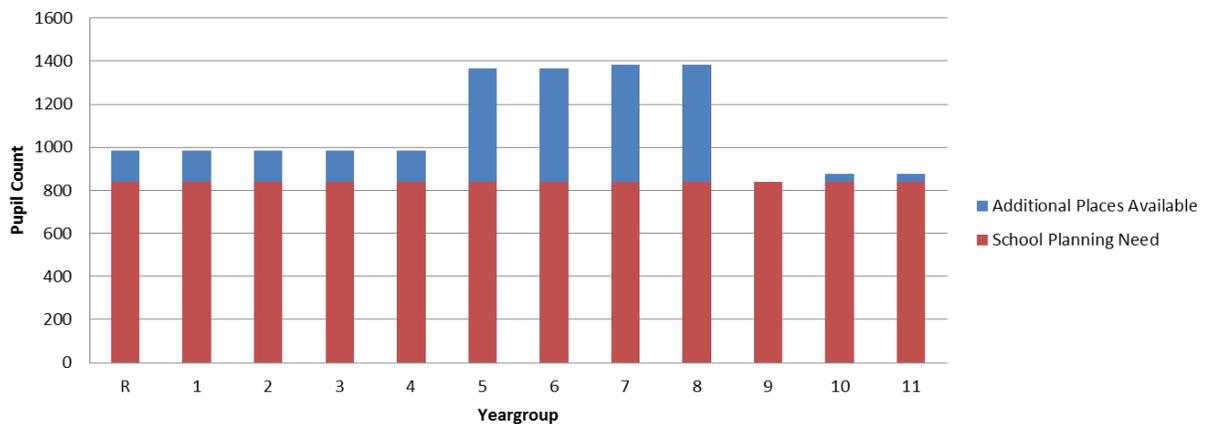
- September 2014:
 - Ashton will have **25** full time equivalent, **specialist, KS4 experienced** teaching staff in Ashton school.
 - 4 technicians, 15 LSAs, 9 Admin staff, 10 kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors, 7 premises staff.
- Our people will build on the **good** quality of education they now provide to pupils of Ashton and these teachers are driven to deliver **outstanding** education to Ashton's pupils (and this will be **delivered within budget**).
- September 2015:
 - maintain the above staffing level
- September 2017:
- Once Ashton has transitioned and is fully functioning as **The Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School**, estimated numbers are as follows:
 - Estimated 30 - 33 teaching staff.
 - 5 technicians, LSAs – depending on needs of pupils, 10 Admin staff, 10 kitchen staff and 7 premises staff. The budget shows a significant surplus in year one of £211,007 which will enable us to respond to the needs of our pupils and the expectations of parents in our community, making us uniquely adaptable as we create a school for the future.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PUPILS

Our pupils – ensuring provision

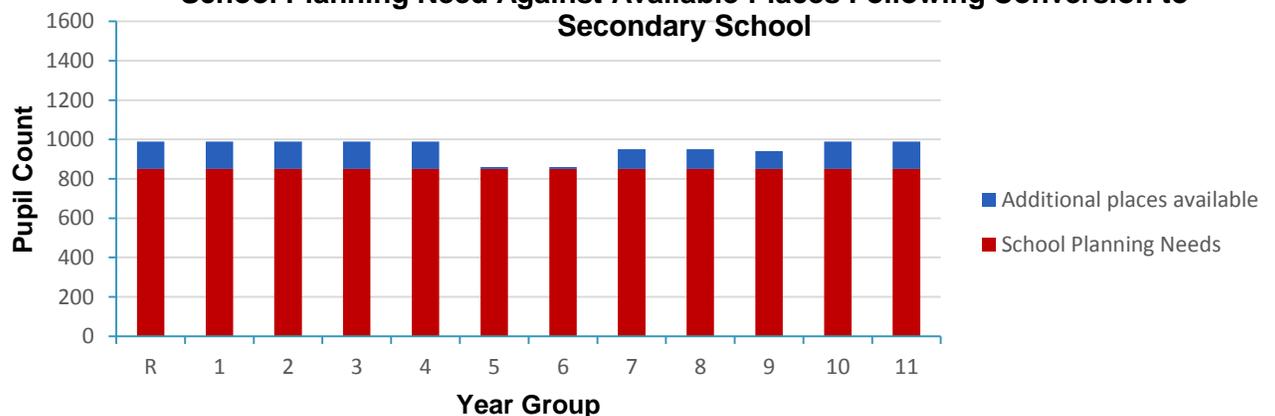
- Both the Children's Services of Central Bedfordshire Council and Ashton recognise that there is a risk that there will not be enough secondary school places in Dunstable in years 9, 10 and 11. (The following graph was presented by Rob Parsons at the consultation evening to close Ashton.)

School Planning Need Against Available Places



- On conversion to an 11 – 16 school the additional places Ashton would provide would ensure that there is the similar surplus in years 7 – 11 as for Years R – 4, giving parents a genuine choice.

School Planning Need Against Available Places Following Conversion to Secondary School



BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PUPILS

Our pupils – ensuring provision and providing choice

“I know how popular Church schools are with parents locally as many are hugely oversubscribed. I would support giving more parents the opportunity for a Church school education for their children in the north of Dunstable.”

Andrew Selous MP

(Andrew’s response when discussing proposals to convert Ashton Middle School to Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School.)

“We are already heavily over-subscribed for Year 9 entry.”

www.Mansheadschoo.co.uk 3rd April 2014

It is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that they provide enough school places for the children of Dunstable, to drive the highest educational standards and to ensure there is choice for parents.

With Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School there is a **choice**

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PUPILS

Our pupils – ensuring provision and providing choice

- Both the Children's Services of Central Bedfordshire Council and Ashton agree that parents were misled in October 2013 when they were asked to select the schools they wanted their children to attend.
- Ashton believes that as it evolves and becomes a secondary school, and as parents are given an honest and realistic choice, it will attract the following numbers:

	September 2014	September 2015	September 2016	September 2017	September 2018	September 2019
Year 5	60					
Year 6	100	90				
Year 7	50	90	90	90	90	90
Year 8	100	50+	90	90	90	90
Year 9		80+	60+	90	90	90
Year 10			80+	60+	90	90
Year 11				80+	60+	90
Totals	310	310+	320+	410	420+	450

We consulted with relevant parties, including the **Local Authority**, who recommended we **increased admission numbers** in 2015 for year 6 to match our proposed PAN of 90.

Significantly, **since September**, we have had **34 in-year admissions**, even with all the current uncertainty. Other middle schools have had 11 and 14 additional pupils since September (data provided by CBC Schools Admissions).

It is of particular note that a number of pupils have returned into Year 7 following transfer to a local upper school which has converted to a secondary. It is clear that there is parental demand for the education which we offer.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PUPILS**Our pupils – ensuring provision and providing choice****Marketing**

Ashton is confident in its admission numbers, although believes the numbers to be conservative so is undertaking the following activities to ensure that parents in Dunstable are aware of the choice that Ashton as a Secondary School gives them:

- Traditional Media – building on the afore mentioned links with the national and local media to ensure that Ashton’s positive collaboration and progress through the consultation process is being recognised in the local press (including: Dunstable Gazette, www.Dunstabletoday.co.uk, and 3 Counties Radio)
- Social Media – using the schools’ own site and Facebook. Ashton parents have also set up a site to inform other parents in Ashton and across Dunstable of the great work in school
- Year 6 evening
- Building links with other schools e.g. 60 lower school pupils attended the dress rehearsal for our annual school production (March 2014)
- The busy A5 runs alongside the school and the school fence is used to spread the word.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR BUDGET

Our budget – **control costs, raise revenues**

- Ashton is honest, realistic and recognises that when Ashton delivers outstanding education it will also be delivering a successful financial position too. To support this reality Ashton has invested in a dedicated business manager who has worked with the Ashton Leadership Team and Governing Body to produce this budget.

Income Headlines

- Primary source of income is the capitation and the newly appointed Business Manager has used a realistic, but conservative, estimate of pupil numbers to build this budget.
- As well as driving up numbers through marketing activity the Business Manager also has great experience in cost control and revenue generation. Since starting in March 2014 she has already:
 - re- negotiated a number of contractual terms
 - sourced grants for music and general expenditure
 - refined existing and introduced new cost control practices to ensure best value is achieved.
- Future income opportunities – include leasing out buildings as the school transitions to become Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR BUDGET

Expenditure Headlines – People

- 2015-2016 – Maintain current staffing structure with minimal additional staffing adjustments. Leading to a **£211,000 surplus** which would be carried through to the following year.
- 2016 – 2017 – We would anticipate the need for an additional 4 teachers at this point. Taking an average salary of £40,000, including on-costs, this would add an additional £160,000 to the staffing costs for that year. This leaves **£81,923 to carry forward** to 2017 – 2018.
- 2017 -2018 – We would anticipate employing an additional 4 teachers at this point. Taking an average salary of £40,000, including on-costs, this would add an additional £160,000 to the staffing costs for that year. Leaving us with a **surplus of £306,807**.
- This means that, not only would we have sufficient to staff the planned curriculum, **additional funds would be available to enhance facilities** as required.
- It is expected that senior staff levels would be maintained or adapted. However, there is sufficient flexibility to add as required.

Risks:

At this stage these figures are based on average salaries and, whilst this is robust and based on current figures, this could change. However, we believe that the projected **budget has contingency & flex** to absorb any changes to pension contributions, salary increases or the need to appoint more highly qualified staff.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR BUDGET

Expenditure Headlines - Premises

- There are additional costs and **responsibilities** that come with keeping a beautiful, grade II listed building alive.
- This has always been the case and we have managed to maintain our buildings to a high standard by effective housekeeping and the right investments. For example in 2013 **we upgraded our boiler system** and **carried out extensive renovation** to remove and protect the front of the school from pollution.
- Over the last three years **we have spent £54,230** on building repairs and maintenance, this averages out at **£18,076.66 per annum** which **is easily manageable** within our projected budget. (£49,742 of the total was on one off long term repairs such as replacing the boilers, new carpeting, roof repairs etc. These will not need to be re-done for many years.)
- Our 5 year electrical testing is due, this costs approximately £3,000 and is accounted for in the budget.
- 2015 – 17 (as the budget allows) – to support our outstanding teachers in delivering an outstanding education **we will upgrade** the science laboratories **and develop the gymnasium**, hall and language facilities. In the interim, these areas will be more than adequate.
- We are developing links with the leisure centre, a short walk from the school, which will enhance the access to facilities for our pupils.

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR BUDGET**Projected budget for 2015 -2016.****Headlines :****Expenditure 2015 - 16**

Teaching staff	£1,110,619
Support staff	£557,174
Buildings and occupancy costs	£ 92,180
Learning resources and other costs	£136,830

Income 2015 -16 £2,116,310

Projected surplus 2015 - 2016 **£211,007**

In the following years the projected cumulative surplus is:

2016 - 2017	£241,923
2017 – 2018	£663,215

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR BUDGET

703201 ASHTON MIDDLE - Summary Income and Expenditure Projections				
CFR Code	Details	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Income				
I01-I04 / I14	Individual School Budget	1,861,810	1,685,900	2,045,290
I05	Pupil Premium	115,000	125,000	135,000
I06 - I07	Other Grants	44,500	45,500	46,500
I08 - I13	Other Income	95,000	95,000	95,000
I15 - I17	Com. Foc. Schools Income	0	0	0
Total Income		2,116,310	1,951,400	2,321,790
Expenditure				
E01-E02 / E26	Staff Costs - Teaching	1,110,619	1,116,813	1,123,035
E03 - E07	Staff Costs - Support	557,174	558,112	558,891
E08 - E11	Other Employment Costs	8,500	8,800	9,400
Total Staffing Costs		1,676,293	1,683,725	1,691,326
E12 - E18	Occupancy Costs	92,180	94,930	98,750
E19 - E21	Learning Resources	64,830	69,830	74,830
E22-E25 / E27-E30	Other Costs	72,000	72,000	72,000
E31 - E32	Com. Foc. School Costs	0	0	0
Total Expenditure		1,905,303	1,920,485	1,936,906
In Year Surplus / (Deficit)		211,007	30,915	384,884
Surplus / (Deficit) Brought Forward		0	211,007	241,923
Cumulative Surplus / (Deficit) C/Fwd		211,007	241,923	626,807
Capital				
CI01/CI03-CI04	Capital Income	0	0	0
CE01 - CE04	Capital Expenditure	0	0	0
In Year Surplus / (Deficit)		0	0	0
Surplus / (Deficit) Brought Forward		0	0	0
Cumulative Surplus / (Deficit) C/Fwd		0	0	0

BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PARENTS’ CHOICE

Our Parents’ choice – consultation outcome

	Total Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Percentage excluding Neither Agree Nor Disagree comments
In favour	122	84.72%	93.13%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	9.03%	
Disagree	9	6.25%	6.87%
	144		131

Through the recent consultation, our parents have actively and clearly articulated their views, here are just a few:

- Having a smaller secondary school based in a very central location would benefit, especially, those students whose needs are best met from being offered more individual strategies, support or challenges that may otherwise be lost in a bigger school. This **allows a greater choice for parents**, in both location and size of school, and also where **faith is important**. *Parent*
- We **strongly welcome this change** as we have been extremely happy with Ashton for the past four years and would have loved our daughter to continue there. Ashton has **offered a good education** in a loving Christian environment. Please do not close this school. *Parent*
- Ashton Middle School **has proven itself** to be a proactive school and **listening to the needs of the parents** in the community and this has been shown by the drive to change to a secondary school. The school has been part of the life in Dunstable and the surrounding towns since 1887. In my opinion, the school should continue to educate our children to year 11. *Parent*

•BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PARENTS' CHOICE

- My daughter has flourished since starting at Ashton. She is now in year 6. I would really like her to complete her school career at Ashton as I believe they really do **see each child as an individual** and cater to their individual needs. *Parent*
- Another secondary age range school in the area would be an excellent idea, **providing parents with more choice** and helping to keep future numbers at other Dunstable schools more manageable. *Parent*

(The full list of comments can be found in the consultation document.)

• BUSINESS PLAN – OUR PARENTS' CHOICE**Our Parents' Choice - Conclusion**

- Our parents, the people of Dunstable, know that it is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that they provide enough school places for the children of Dunstable.
- Our parents, the people of Dunstable, want Central Bedfordshire Council to **work together with Ashton**, to drive high educational standards, to offer parents **a real and genuine choice** and to show that Ashton is more than financially and educationally viable. Working together, Central Bedfordshire and Ashton will show that **Ashton is financially and educationally successful**
- Our parents want Central Bedfordshire Council to support the people of Ashton (our teachers, our support staff, our leaders and our governors) to deliver that success and outstanding educational results for our pupils.
- Let's give our parents a real and genuine choice. Let's support Ashton in nurturing and developing our children, to equip our children to make the best possible choices in life.

PROPOSALS FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS

NB It is important that this document is read in conjunction with the attached business plan, which contains additional, more detailed, information.

1 - Name of Proposer

(Local Education Authority or Governing Body)

Ashton C of E VA Middle School Governing Body

2 - School Name

Ashton C of E Middle School

3 - School Address

High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1NH

4 - Description of proposed prescribed alteration

The proposal is to change the age range of Ashton Church of England Voluntary Aided Middle School from a 9 – 13 years Middle school to an 11 – 16 years secondary school. We also propose to change the name of the school to The Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School.

5 - The date on which the proposals are planned to be implemented - If they are to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage

Implementation to take place in September 2015

Four stages of implementation

- September 2014 - Year 5 pupils admitted to Ashton Middle School for the last time.
- September 2015 - Year 8 pupils stay on into YR 9 (School now Yrs 6-9)
- September 2016 - Year 9 pupils stay on into YR 10 (school now Yrs 7-10)
- September 2017 - Year 10 pupils stay on into Yr 11. The school is now a fully functioning 11 – 16 school.

The school will welcome any pupils into any of the existing year groups, providing the school does not exceed their admission number of 90 pupils per year group.

6 – Consideration of consultation and representation period - evidence of demand for the proposed alteration, including details of consultation(s) carried out, meetings held and responses received.

We have undertaken extensive consultation with all key stakeholders and, as a result, we know that our proposal meets with widespread agreement.

We held two main evenings: one for stakeholders (96 attended) and one for staff (71 attended).

The following were consulted:

- Chairs of Governors for all Central Bedfordshire schools & academies
- Head Teachers of all Central Bedfordshire schools & academies
- Central Bedfordshire Council officers within Children’s Services
- Dunstable PCC
- Ashton Schools Foundation
- Houghton Regis Ward members
- Dunstable Ward members
- All Central Bedfordshire Council ward members
- Ashton Middle School parents/carers
- Ashton Middle School staff
- Ashton Middle School governors
- Houghton Regis Town Council
- Dunstable Town Council
- Local MPs
- Trade unions
- General public

Andrew Selous MP said **“I know how popular Church schools are with parents locally as many are hugely oversubscribed. I would support giving more parents the opportunity for a Church school education for their children in the north of Dunstable.”**

All applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with.

In the following years the projected cumulative surplus is:

2016 - 2017	£241,923
2017 - 2018	£663,215

See business plan for more detailed analysis.

Projected anticipated staffing levels are as follows:

- 2015-2016 – Maintain current staffing structure with minimal additional staffing adjustments. Leading to a £211,000 surplus which would be carried through to the following year.
- 2016 – 2017 – We would anticipate the need for an additional 4 teachers at this point. Taking an average salary of £40,000, including “on costs”, this would add an additional £160,000 to the staffing costs for that year. This leaves £81,923 to carry forward to 2017 – 2018.
- 2017 -2018 – We would anticipate employing an additional 4 teachers at this point. Taking an average salary of £40,000, including on costs, this would add an additional £160,000 to the staffing costs for that year. Leaving us with a surplus of £306,807.
- This means that, not only would we have sufficient to staff the planned curriculum, additional funds would be available to enhance facilities as required.
- It is expected that senior staff levels would be maintained or adapted. However, there is sufficient flexibility to add as required.

Risks:

At this stage these figures are based on average salaries and, whilst this is robust and based on current figures, this could change. However, we believe that the projected budget has sufficient surplus to absorb any changes to pension contributions, salary increases or the need to appoint more highly qualified staff.

2. Cost of building maintenance

- There are additional costs and responsibilities that come with keeping a beautiful, grade II listed building alive.
- This has always been the case and we have managed to maintain our buildings to a high standard by effective housekeeping and the right investments. For example in 2013 we upgraded our boiler system and removed the pollution from the front of the school.
- Over the last three years we have spent £54,230 on building repairs and maintenance, this averages out at £18,076.66 per year which is easily manageable within our projected budget. However, £49,742 of the total was spent on one off long term repairs such as replacing the boilers, new carpeting, roof repairs etc. These will not need to be done for many years.

Our 5 year electrical testing is due, this costs approximately £3000 and has been included in the budget.

- 2015 – 17 as the budget allows – to support our outstanding teachers in delivering an outstanding education we will upgrade the science laboratories and develop the gymnasium, hall and language facilities. In the interim, these areas will be more than adequate.

3. Ability to provide a full secondary curriculum

Given staffing levels listed above we are able to provide a full, innovative and reactive curriculum based on the needs and desires of parents and pupils. See section 7 and the business plan for more information.

4. The need for additional places in the secondary sector in Dunstable

“I know how popular Church schools are with parents locally as many are hugely over-subscribed. I would support giving more parents the opportunity for a Church school education for their children in the north of Dunstable.”

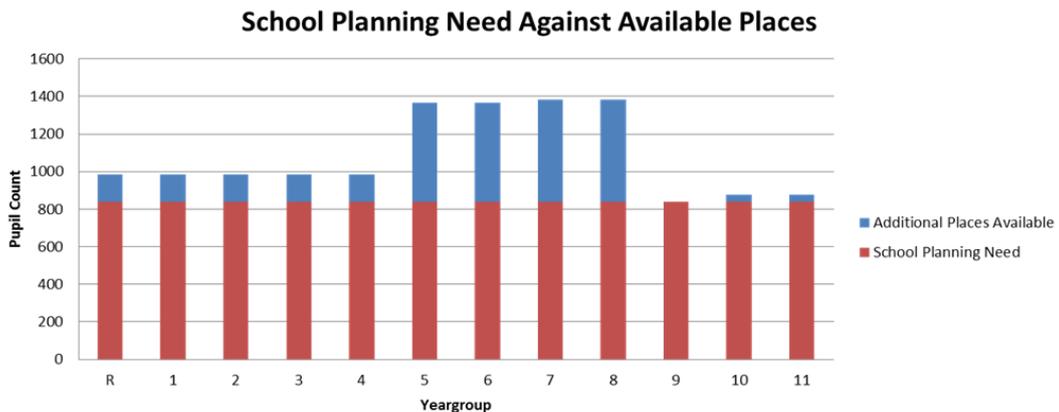
Response by Andrew Selous MP when discussing proposals to convert Ashton Middle School to Frances Ashton C of E Secondary School.

The risk of there being too few secondary places is a reality if parents wish their child to be educated in a faith school, as the one other faith school is continually over-subscribed, their website on 1st April states that “We are already heavily over-subscribed for Year 9 entry.”

It is widely recognised how important having a choice of faith education is to the voters in Dunstable.

Both the Children's Services of Central Bedfordshire Council and Ashton recognise that there is a risk that there will not be enough secondary school places in Dunstable in years 9, 10 and 11.

The following graph was presented by Rob Parsons at the consultation evening to close Ashton.



7 – Education standards and diversity of provision - the effect that this proposal would have on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area and also on the local community

Our curriculum is, and always has been, broad, balanced and innovative. We are confident to try new initiatives and exploring alternatives for our pupils. This year we have initiated three major curriculum changes, see our business plan for details.

This bold, innovative approach would be continued and developed further in an 11 – 16 school and the small nature of the school would mean that we could respond to the needs of our pupils, developing the curriculum to ensure that all pupils make good progress and are ready for the workplace. We have plans to support our vulnerable pupils and extend our more able providing them with new and exciting challenges. See section 11 for more details.

The school believes that continuing to offer access to a full curriculum provided by **specialist teachers** in **specialist areas**, from the age of 11, will provide our pupils with the skills and subject knowledge to enhance their learning to ensure consistent progress is made.

We have proved (OFSTED 2013) that progress is **good** for the years our pupils are with us. Intervention is effective and consistent and pupils enjoy learning. We believe that this will lead to good or better progress at KS4.

Our work with **vulnerable pupils** has been consistently **highly commended** by OFSTED and by our local community e.g. Jigsaw and Social Services etc.

We also believe that the **nurturing environment** we provide for these pupils will also lead to higher levels of **progress and success at KS4**.

In year 8 our pupils are already competing and performing at the highest levels and we have committed staff, experienced in delivering GCSE's, who will continue to facilitate this achievement up to year 11 and beyond. Over recent years we have prepared year 8 students for GCSE level work in both maths and French, indicating that our staff are confident and competent to deliver to GCSE level.

“Progress in mathematics accelerates in Key Stage 3. Last year’s year 8 pupils made almost as much progress across years 7 and 8 as expected nationally across years 7 to 9” OFSTED 2013.

We believe that our conversion to a secondary faith school would not have a negative impact on other schools in the area due to the figures quotes by CBC – see graph in section 6. The other secondary faith school is already reporting that year 9 is heavily oversubscribed this year, this is clearly an option parents are choosing and our conversion to secondary will help to meet this demand. Future plans for additional housing in the north of the town will also put additional pressure on school places in the long term. OFSTED stated that the Governing Body were and are confident and continued to move the school forward.

8 – Demand

Demand for secondary faith provision has already been shown, see section 7, and the local MP recognises that church school are a popular option for parents.

Our own consultation has also demonstrated clear demand from stakeholders – see figures in section 6 and full responses in our consultation document. There is a representative sample of comments in our business plan.

9 – School size - details of the number of pupils in school at the date of publication of this proposal, the current capacity of the school and, where the proposals will alter the capacity of the school, the proposed capacity of the school after the alteration

There are 475 pupils at the school at the time of the publication of the proposal. Following discussions with a variety of stakeholders, we aim to achieve three form entry for Year 7 by September 2015, to offer the Frances Ashton Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary School as an additional secondary provision in Dunstable.

See following page for table.

We consulted with relevant parties, including the LA who recommended we increase admission numbers for 2015 in Year 6 to 90, matching our proposed PAN.

	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Sept 2016	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019
Year 5	60					
Year 6	100	90				
Year 7	50	90	90	90	90	90
Year 8	100	50+	90	90	90	90
Year 9		80+	60+	90	90	90
Year 10			80+	60+	90	90
Year 11				80+	60+	90
Total	310	310+	320+	410	420+	450

10 – Proposed admission arrangements (including post-16 provision)

The current admission arrangements fully comply with the admissions code, any amendment the Governors wish to make would be fully compliant with any regulations in place at the time. Initially we expect the admission criteria to remain the same, as the age range changes we will amend accordingly.

11 – National Curriculum

Our curriculum is, and always has been, broad, balanced and innovative, see section 7 above.

We will continue to enhance and develop our provision as follows:

Years 7 & 8 (KS3)

As per current timetable. The amended staffing structure, starting in September 2014, makes provision for the teaching of all current subjects without compromise. This structure is funded within our current budget.

Years 9-11 (KS4)

The current staffing structure allows includes expertise to teach all of these areas to GCSE level. As numbers increase we would employ staff to extend and enhance options available, depending on student demand.

Current thinking is as follows:

Qualification		Year 10	Year 11
GCSE	English & English Literature	4 lessons	
GCSE	Mathematics	4 lessons	
GCSE	Triple Science	6 lessons	
GCSE	Double Science		
GCSE	ICT	1 lesson	
	Physical Education	2 lessons	1 lesson
GCSE	Religious and Social Education	1 lesson	
GCSE	French	3 lessons	
Options		See next page	

Options include

- GCSE Art
- GCSE Business Studies
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE Graphic Design
- GCSE History
- GCSE ICT
- GCSE Media Studies
- BTEC Music
- GCSE Resistant Materials
- BTEC Sport
- GCSE Textiles
- An Additional Work-Based Program

We already have staff who could deliver all of these options and other BTEC courses would be considered. Projections indicate that this is achievable within our projected budget. See section 6 – Financial viability.

The above is only an indication of some of the options we would be able to offer.

Alternative Curriculum For Our Vulnerable Pupils

We recognise our current strengths with vulnerable and less able pupils and would be able to offer an alternative curriculum to meet their diverse needs. We already have experience of an adapted timetable with our SAS programme (Strive Achieve Succeed), which is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum. We are in the process of planning an extended and adapted SAS group for older pupils so that we can provide an appropriate curriculum for our less able pupils or those with specific needs. We have allocated and budgeted for staff to run this programme and they have already visited a number of alternative provisions as part of the planning process.

Alternative European Baccalaureate (EBac) alongside GCSE for more able pupils?

We are also considering an EBac based course for more able pupils who would be accelerated to complete this by end of year 11. We have proven experience of getting pupils to at least GCSE level in maths and French by the end of year 8, so this would not be difficult to achieve. We already have the expertise to teach the required subjects.

Extra-Curricular Provision

The school has been recognised for many years for its extra-curricular provision. Each week we currently have over 50 clubs running at lunchtime and after school, in a variety of areas. This demonstrates not only the commitment of staff but also their versatility. We would enhance and develop opportunities available as the age range increases.

School Day

The school day would be as currently operating i.e. 25 period week, with each period being 1 hour. The timetable runs over 2 weeks, in a secondary school this would allow for greater flexibility and more options for students. Once we begin to admit years nine and ten a change or modification would be considered to assess whether an earlier or later start would also be beneficial.

Curriculum - Summary

The above plan demonstrates our current thinking and is an indication of some of the options we would be able to offer.

We are keen to emphasise that **this is a starting point.**

Our leadership team and our **enthusiastic and innovative** staff will adapt as the needs of our pupils and the desires of our parents dictate, and we will design and develop a curriculum that delivers outstanding educational standards and keeps the needs of our **children at the heart of everything we do**.

12 – Equal opportunity issues

NA

13 – Community cohesion

- Ashton Middle School is situated in the heart of Dunstable town centre, the heart of Dunstable's history and the heart of Dunstable's community
- In 1726, the Ashton Foundation established an educational institution based on the teachings and principles of the Church of England.
- Our current building is a well maintained, grade II listed building which dates back to 1888.
- For centuries, Ashton has worked with the parents and children of Dunstable and provided education as a boarding school, grammar school and middle school.
- We are again proposing to reflect the wishes of the local community by changing our age range and continuing **Ashton's evolution** in becoming **The Frances Ashton C of E VA Secondary School**.
- Former pupils include **Mike Bannister** (pilot of the last commercial Concorde Flight), **Gary Cooper** (Hollywood Actor), **Geoffrey Moore CBE** (Vauxhall Motor's Chairman), **Norman Morris** (Professor who revolutionised maternity care in the UK), **Khawaja Nazimuddin** (Pakistan's 2nd Prime Minister in the 1950's) and **Kevin McCloud** (TV Presenter – Grand Designs)

Contribution to the community through sport, music and charity events is a strength of the school. (Success in music exams, performance in the community, outstanding achievement in local and county sporting events).

The percentage of vulnerable/FSM/SEN pupils contributing to the above is high, all our extra-curricular activities are inclusive. This is the expectation of our school. We take every opportunity to work with any school in our local community and beyond.

14 – Travel and accessibility

There will be no significant changes to travel or accessibility as the overall number of pupils will not change. The school has recently been part of the Sustrans programme and has upgraded the provision for pupils wishing to cycle to school. We will continue to work with all relevant authorities to ensure that we continue to encourage sustainable transport where possible.

15 – Capital

No additional land or buildings are required.

16 – School premises and playing fields

We have a playing field at West Parade and astro-turf facilities on the school grounds, ensuring sufficient space for all legal requirements regarding outdoor space to be met.

17 – Changes to special educational need provision – the SEN improvement test

NA